

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A hard capsule filled with a solution ~~containing an active ingredient, characterized in that wherein:~~

the solution ~~contains~~ comprises an active ingredient and an inorganic chloride, and has a water content (w) of  $10 < w \leq 80\%$  by weight and a water activity (a) of  $0.50 \leq a \leq 0.90$ [[,]]; and [[that]]

the capsule ~~is made of a base material containing~~ comprises a cellulose derivative.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): [[A]] ~~The hard capsule as described in~~ according to claim 1, wherein the cellulose derivative is one or more members selected from the group consisting of hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, methylcellulose, hydroxypropyl cellulose, and hydroxyethyl cellulose.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): [[A]] ~~The hard capsule as described in~~ according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the inorganic chloride is one or more members selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, magnesium chloride, and calcium chloride.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): [[A]] ~~The hard capsule as described in any one of claims 1 to 3~~ according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the active ingredient is selected from the group consisting of an aqueous extract of a medicinal herb, an aqueous extract of animal- or plant-origin, and an aqueous extract of fermented matter.

Claim 5 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the inorganic chloride is present in the solution in an amount of 0.01 to 0.45 g/mL.

Claim 6 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the inorganic chloride is present in the solution in an amount of 0.20 to 0.45 g/mL.

Claim 7 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the water content (w) is  $10 < w \leq 75\%$  by weight.

Claim 8 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the water content (w) is  $10 < w \leq 70\%$  by weight.

Claim 9 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the water activity (a) is  $0.50 \leq a \leq 0.80$ .

Claim 10 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the water activity (a) is  $0.50 \leq a \leq 0.75$ .

Claim 11 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the cellulose derivative is present in an amount of 15 to 30% by weight on the basis of the base material.

Claim 12 (New): The hard capsule according to claim 1, wherein the active ingredient is an aqueous extract of a medicinal herb, the water content (w) is  $30 \leq w \leq 50\%$  by weight, the water activity (a) is  $0.60 \leq a \leq 0.80$ , and the cellulose derivative is hydroxypropyl methylcellulose.